

Overview of Federal Grassroots Advocacy Strategy: 2017 and Beyond





- NAGC understands the power of federal, state, and local policy to create environments that *either support or hinder* the learning, growth, and development of gifted and talented children.

- As a result, the NAGC Board of Directors charged the office to create a strategy to *“advocate for the adoption of policies that promote programs and services in which gifted and talented children will thrive”* through the strategic framework adopted in September, 2016.

Theory of Action:

- The nature of American education is one of decentralization.
- Education is primarily a local and state activity with a loose framework of direction, support, and guidance from federal law and policy.

- *To increase continuity and equity* for gifted children across our nation's education system, it is imperative that NAGC develop and publicly articulate a national (federal, state, local) policy and advocacy agenda.
- The agenda should call for specific policies and programs *that support all gifted and talent students regardless of their background.*

- Due to the decentralized education system in the United States, NAGC must engage in a *multi-pronged* strategy to influence policy at both the federal and state level.

- The most recent reauthorization of the Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) has several important provisions to support gifted and talented students.
- This version of Federal law, for the first time, specifically references the learning needs of gifted and talented students.

Title I now enumerates that:

- Funds may be used to identify and serve gifted and talented students;
- Disaggregation of student achievement data at each achievement level on state and local report cards must be included; and
 - States may develop computer adaptive assessments used for accountability purposes.

Title II - Professional Development:

- State plans must address gifted students;
- Districts receiving Title II funds *must provide training to address the learning of gifted and talented students*; and
- Districts may provide training to support the identification of gifted and talented students, including high-ability students who have not been formally identified as gifted and talented.



- The new Federal law creates opportunities for state and local leaders to support gifted students, ***but offers no promises for quality services.***
 - To leverage the opportunity for positive change, NAGC should organize *all members and every part of our constituency* to highlight *exemplar policies and practices* to increase their chance of eventually being incorporated into federal policies and programs.



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Policy Objectives:

NAGC will continue and strengthen its *focus on the following federal advocacy objectives* -

- Maintaining and growing investments in the Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Program.

- Ensuring that Title I and II guidance addresses the education of gifted and talented students.
- Advocating for regulatory changes to support gifted and talented students (if applicable).

Additionally, NAGC will articulate *policy objectives* for adoption and implementation at the state and local levels.

AFT President Weingarten

“The frontier in education has moved from Washington, D.C., to state capitols, districts and school communities. This doesn’t mean that the federal government has no role. We still need it to promote equity by funding schools that serve disadvantaged children and protecting the civil rights of all children, including LGBTQ students, still vitally important 60 years after the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* decision.”

Policy Objectives

- After receiving *informal* feedback from several NAGC constituencies, reviewing NAGC whitepapers, and NAGC supported research, there appears to be general consensus that our organization's policy agenda should focus on five areas (in no specific order of importance):

Five Focus Areas:

- Identification;
- Acceleration;
- Professional development;
- Including gifted students in the accountability system; and
- Comprehensive state support for gifted and talented students.

- These five areas are meant to *provide focus* and *foster an evolving dialogue as we build out a more detailed national policy framework* to facilitate a more supportive policy environment to fulfill the strategic goal set by our Board.

- The *first four focus areas drill down on a specific policy objective and the fifth is purposely more comprehensive and aspirational in nature.*
- These areas of focus reflect *an attempt at a bipartisan legislative baseline* as we advocate for national policies to support gifted and talented students.

- They also keep in mind that some legislators prefer to highlight a specific issue (e.g. supporting teachers) and others prefer a more comprehensive approach.

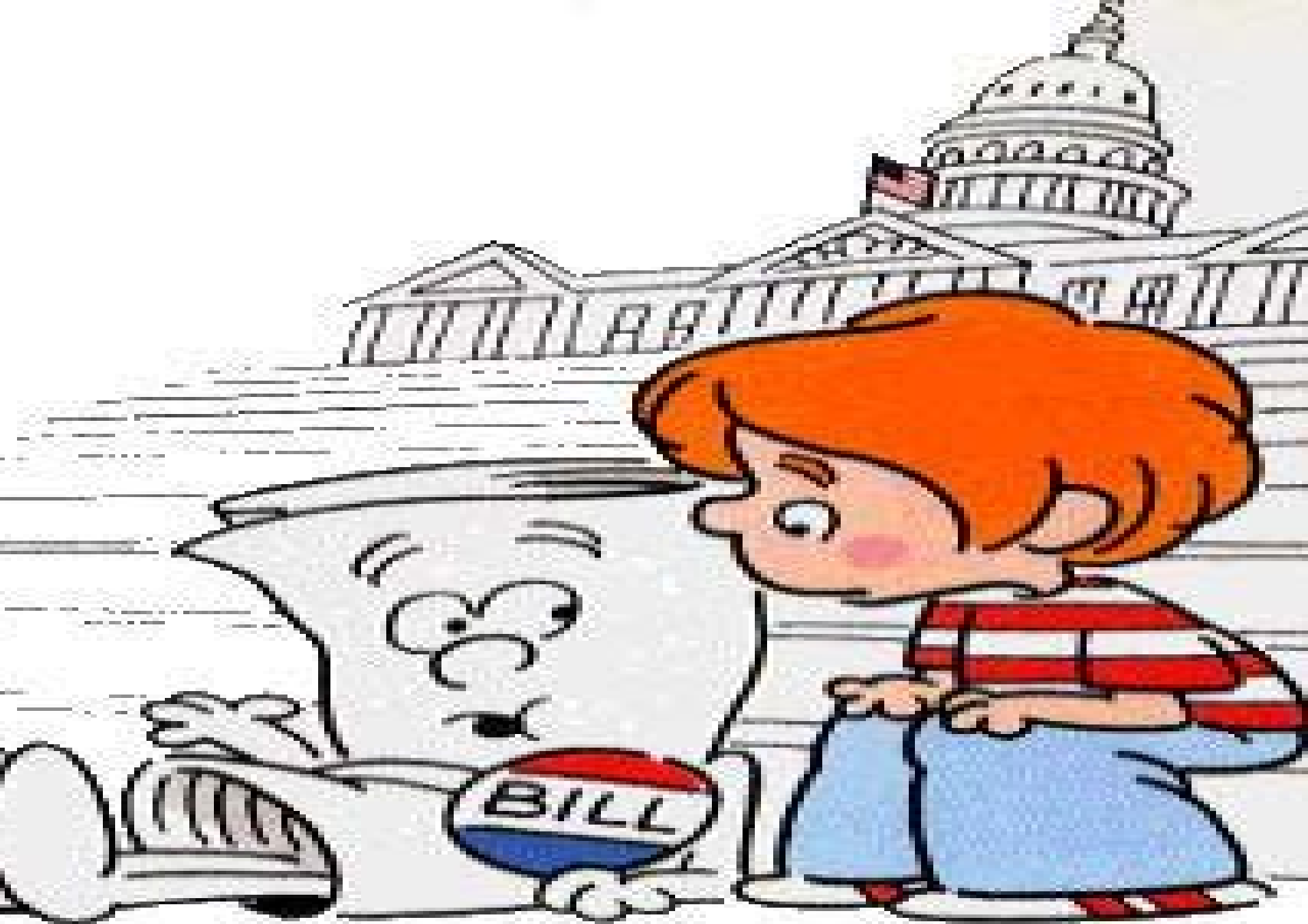
Building NAGC's Advocacy Infrastructure:

- The first step in building NAGC's federal advocacy infrastructure is strengthening the capacity to reach every Congressional district and to maintain contact throughout the year.

- Ideally, NAGC will build a group of at least two advocates in each Congressional district with the interest, knowledge, and skills to effectively engage in advocacy with their respective members of the U.S. Congress.



- Less than a fifth of Congress.
 - 96 seats maximum.
- Handful of Members in each state.
 - CA has the max at 6.
- 7 States make up Chair/Ranking for the most influential Committees – CT, MO, NC, OK, TN, VA, and WA.



We must start by building our capacity to influence key leaders in the House and Senate:

- Chairs and Ranking Members of Education Authorizing Committees in the House and Senate.
- Chairs and Ranking Members of the Education Appropriations Sub-committees in the House and Senate.
- Members of the Committees that write the law and allocate the money and are not the Chair/Ranking Member.

- If successful, we hope to eventually develop 435 pairs of advocates for each Congressional district to influence legislators on and off committee.

- Each pair will consist of one individual that:
- Works in the gifted field (e.g. researchers or teachers); and
- Serves as a third party validator (e.g. parents or business professionals).



- Vital to develop a relationship with Congressional staff as they are in many ways the filter on what gets to the Member.

- Also, to the extent practicable, NAGC needs to highlight that it's extremely important that the individuals selected are *representative of the diversity of their communities*.
- All kinds of diversity – Race, gender, LGBTQ, socio-economic, disability, regional, political, etc.

THINK OUTSIDE



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- For individuals that can't make it to Washington, DC, we'll make sure that they are aware that there are still *opportunities available to meet with state staff* or to ask for a 15-minute phone call with a Member's DC based education legislative assistant.

- Beyond our Washington, DC advocacy this month, we'd like to sustain our efforts and ask you to commit to reaching out to your Senators and Representative *two more times* between now and the March 2018 Leadership & Advocacy Conference.

- These two outreach efforts can be informal, such as forwarding an article regarding the positive impact your gifted program is having in your area, forwarding information from the NAGC website, or sending a copy of *Parenting for High Potential* or *Teaching for High Potential*.

- **Advocacy is a team effort and we appreciate all of your support!**

A photograph of a basketball hoop and ball against a blue background. The hoop is in the foreground, and the ball is positioned below it. The text is overlaid on the image.

“Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence wins championships.”

- Michael Jordan

Question
everything

